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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KYIV 000214

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [GG](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR COMMUNITY OF
DEMOCRATIC CHOICE

REF: A. 06 VILNIUS 442
[B](#). 06 TBLISI 642
[C](#). 05 KIEV 5100
[D](#). 05 KIEV 4029

Classified By: Political Counselor Kent Logsdon for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Community of Democratic Choice (CDC), as described in an August 2005 joint statement by Ukrainian President Yushchenko and Georgian President Saakashvili, was to be a continuing dialogue and series of meetings to promote democracy, human rights, and civil society in former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact countries (refs C and D). However, for the past six-eight months, there has been little action. FM Tarasyuk is committed to keeping the Community of Democratic Choice from fading into oblivion and hopes to hold a forum in 2008 focusing on energy related political issues. However, his colleagues in the MFA say that meaningful planning for a CDC forum is not possible until the struggle between Yushchenko and Yanukovych over the MFA's leadership, in particular Tarasyuk's own future, is resolved. Some NGO analysts are very negative about CDC's future, arguing that the Yanukovych Government has little interest in promoting it.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment. The CDC was hailed as a powerful impetus for democratic change in the region after its inaugural December 2, 2005 forum that was attended by U/S Dobriansky, presidents of nine countries in the area, several other government delegations, and observers from the EU and the OSCE. After the inaugural meeting, several conferences were held under CDC auspices in 2006 (refs A and B), including a May 4 conference in Vilnius which attracted worldwide attention for Vice President Cheney's keynote address critical of Russian interference in new democracies. Since the future of the CDC depends upon the struggle over who controls the Foreign Ministry and the attitude of the Yanukovych government, which may be reluctant to fully embrace what is widely seen as a Yushchenko and Tarasyuk initiative, the prospects for CDC are uncertain. End Summary and comment.

Ukrainian MFA is Still Pushing the CDC

[1](#)3. (SBU) Although there has been little to report on the CDC since the May 2006 Vilnius Summit, FM Tarasyuk raised this issue in a January 12 meeting with the Ambassador arguing that Ukraine remains strongly committed to the organization. He noted that CDC completed all the meetings agreed to in New York in September 2005 and asked that the U.S. pay more attention to the CDC and not let the process wither away. Tarasyuk would like to set up a schedule of meetings for the next few years and said that he had already talked to the Poles about hosting the next one. When we checked with out Polish Embassy colleagues here, they knew nothing about the proposal.

¶4. (C) On January 23, MFA Political Department First Secretary Ihor Kulish, responsible at the working level for

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CDC, said he recently spoke with First Deputy Head of the Presidential Secretariat Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who said Ukraine should take the initiative in organizing another CDC forum. Kulish felt that the CDC meetings should be annual and the topic, "practical." MFA favored an energy related topic for the next CDC meeting and envisioned convening an "Energy Dialogue of Three Seas." The forum would address political questions of "predictability and stability" and not just be a meeting of energy ministers. The MFA had sounded out participants at the May 3-5 CDC meeting in Vilnius regarding possible hosts for the next CDC meeting. Macedonia, Estonia and Poland had been approached, but none had replied. More recently, the MFA had approached the Czech Republic about hosting the forum in Prague. Although Kulish was not optimistic about the prospects of a meeting in 2007, he said there were very good signs that the Czechs would be willing to host such a gathering in 2008.

¶5. (C) Kulish explained that the current discord between President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovych precluded detailed preparations for a CDC meeting. He noted that an organizing committee for such an event would be headed by a Deputy Prime Minister -- an unimaginable prospect under current circumstances in which FM Tarasyuk was barred from weekly cabinet meetings. He also remarked that there are budget constraints both in Kyiv and Prague to consider before organizing a CDC event.

Growing Doubts Elsewhere

¶6. (U) Oleksandr Sushko of the Institute of Euro-Atlantic

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Cooperation sounded a pessimistic note. He opined that the CDC was overly dependent on the political situation in Ukraine immediately after the Orange Revolution and that the current Ukrainian government did not share the same ideals or priorities. Sushko claimed that those who founded the CDC had not filled it with specific substance and that its goals remained amorphous. He said that the forum held in Vilnius did not have the word "community" in its official documents and cited this as evidence that countries in the region were no longer taking the organization seriously.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. Although the CDC is mentioned in passing in the fourth paragraph of the Joint Communique found on the Vilnius conference website (www.vilniusconference2006.lt) the lack of emphasis on the CDC antecedents to the conference does call into question the commitment of participants to a future for CDC. Since CDC is viewed as the brainchild of Yushchenko and Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, as implemented by FM Tarasyuk, it reflects their vision for the region. Although Yushchenko will retain influence at MFA, a further Ukrainian commitment to CDC's future will depend in large part upon the attitude of the Yanukovych government. With Yushchenko's authority under fire, the future of CDC seems uncertain at best as Yushchenko will be distracted and unlikely to be able to expend much political capital to ensure CDC's viability in the near term.

¶8. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
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